



The 37 tractors turned over to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. Originally found in Sadr City, the tractors were repaired and transported by the 256th Brigade Combat Team soldiers and eventually released to the farmers in need of the equipment. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

Soldiers Help Ensure Agricultural Success

Iraqi government and the Ministry of Agriculture work together to bring Iraqi farmers a brighter future

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CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq, May 5, 2005 — Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team ensured farmers of the greater Baghdad area will be able to boost their agricultural development immensely with farm equipment during an equipment signoff event at the Al Radwaniyah Provincial Civil Military Operations Center May 2, 2005.

"We're about to make a bit of history today," said Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr., commander of the 256th Brigade Combat Team. "Handing off this equipment will give assistance to the farmers of the region and provide better agriculture to the Iraqi people."

256th Brigade Combat Team signed over 37 tractors, 16 water pumps, and 56 five-horsepower generators to the Ministry of Agriculture to pass down to farmers in need of



U.S. Army Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr., commander of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, signs documents handing over responsibility for farming equipment to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture at the Al Radwaniyah Provincial Civil Military Operations Center May 2, 2005. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

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"The 256th Brigade Combat Team is out here to assist the local farmers with improving their farming and really just make this signoff happen."

"It's really been a three-fold mission however, as we've already given seeds, fertilizer and now equipment," he said. "This will help promote and improve the chances for Iraqis to feed themselves."

Approximately 100 local farmers and members of the United Farmers of Iraq witnessed the transfer.

Sheik Rasheed Al Shably, director of the UFI, says the tractors will be a great help in reconstructing and improving the Iraqi agricultural economy.

By providing tractors and a trained operator to any farmer

The equipment, originally purchased under the old regime, lay dormant in a Sadr City warehouse for the past three years. Upon finding the equipment, the soldiers transported it to a secure area for repairs and eventual distribution to the farmers.

Present to receive the farming equipment, Saub Hussien, a representative of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, said the equipment being signed over will be put to good use for the Iraqi people.

"We want to thank the U.S. government and U.S. Army for their support and efforts to make this happen," he said. "Their help will make Iraqi's agriculture better and assist many farmers of this area and many others like it."

The hand off of equipment is part of an effort for the soldiers of 256th Brigade Combat Team, who have provided agricultural aid for some time.

"This is all part of Operation Amber Waves, which was initiated during 1st Cavalry Division's time," Basilica said.

submitting a request, the farmers and government of Iraq are committing themselves to improving agriculture for all of the Iraqi people, he said.

With the Ministry of Agriculture and government working side-by-side, farmers now turn to the government for aid.

"This sends a strong signal that the Iraqi government and Ministry of Agriculture are working together and providing the level of assistance that they should," Basilica said. "Now if a farmer has an issue, he turns to the Ministry of Agriculture, who will assist them further."